

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) today questioned the draft plan announced by the Obama Administration that closes the opportunity for energy exploration off the coast of Virginia through 2017. The Interior Department released the Administration's draft five-year plan, which prohibits new offshore drilling and only allows lease sales to occur in areas that are already open. The draft plan excludes lease sales of the entire Atlantic Coast, making it off-limits to new energy production.

“Our economy continues to face challenges, and we have an opportunity to promote job creation and revenue for the Commonwealth. Today's announcement closes off that opportunity,” Wittman said. “I am extremely disappointed that this Administration is – against our will – closing off Virginia's energy resources. Governor McDonnell and the General Assembly have been supportive of the safe, effective exploration for American energy. I will continue to press the Administration to remove these regulations, to allow for job creation and revenue generation for the Commonwealth that is sorely needed. This is an important component in a multi-step, all-of-the-above energy plan that will lessen our dependence on other nations for our energy, and that can create solid jobs for folks across Virginia and across the country.”

Wittman has supported legislation to expand offshore energy production that has passed the House of Representatives, including:

- The [**Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act**](#) would require the Obama Administration to move forward promptly to conduct offshore lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Virginia that the Obama Administration has delayed or canceled. Due to the Obama Administration's actions, in 2011 there will be no offshore lease sales – the first time since 1958.

- The [**Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act**](#) would end the Obama Administration's *de facto* moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico in a safe, responsible, transparent manner by setting firm time-lines for considering permits to drill, which provide certainty and allow employers and workers to get back on the job.

- The [**Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act**](#) would lift the President's ban on new offshore drilling by requiring the Administration to move forward in the 2012-2017 lease plan with energy production in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources.

He has also sponsored legislation to promote the use of wind energy, authoring the *Advancing Offshore Wind Production Act*.

This legislation would streamline the process for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) to approve temporary infrastructure, such as towers or buoys, to test and develop offshore wind power in the Outer Continental Shelf. It

[has been approved by the House Natural Resources Committee](#)

and is ready for House floor consideration.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.